



MAHPERD

Michigan Association for Health,
Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

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May 13, 2009

The Honorable Thomas M. George
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

Dear Senator George,

I am writing in support of Senate Bills 365 and 366 on behalf of the Michigan Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (MAHPERD), and as a member of the Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan (HKHM) – Advocates for Healthy Weight in Children.

MAHPERD is very dedicated to the multifaceted efforts of HKHM to address the obesity epidemic that is very evident in our state, and country. We know that improved Health and Physical Education are not the only answer to the problem, but it is a vital ingredient to help provide our children with the physical skills and knowledge that will empower them to make choices in their lives regarding a healthy, active lifestyle. There is a large body of evidence to support the claims that active children will not only have fewer issues with weight and other health concerns, it also contributes to a host of social, emotional and intellectual issues, such as reduced absences, fewer discipline situations in schools, and increased test scores.

Today's Health and Physical Education curriculums are much different than the experience a lot of people had when growing up. A proper, well aligned curriculum, which meets the Content Standards and Benchmarks, as adopted by the Michigan Department of Education and compliance with same is written into SB 365, will help provide a solid base to establish local programs. This would also provide a basis on which to assess the effectiveness of the programs. The Michigan Department of Education research shows that a large number of the school districts already would meet the time requirements.

The economics of our time certainly will cause some to hesitate as to whether we should proceed with this course right now, but if it is left to continue on its current rate of growth we are not only doing a disservice to our youth, but also insuring increasing health costs will continue unabated when they could have been addressed.

Walt Whitman warned us to avoid mistaking *"neglect of the body for culture of the mind."* Indeed, many years prior to Whitman's time, Plato surmised: *"In order for man to succeed in life, God provided him with two means, education and physical activity. Not separately, one for the soul and the other for the body, but for the two together. With these two means, man can attain perfection."*

With so much at stake, and given the broad backing of the organizations that have signed on to support the HKHM agenda, I hope we do not lose sight of the positive gains that could be accomplished if we have the courage to take them on. Investing in prevention through education, as opposed to spending more money down the road on management, would seem to be a logical starting point.

I encourage the honorable members of the Senate Health Policy Committee to approve Senate Bills 365 and 366, and help the HKHM agenda take a big step toward fighting the obesity and overweight issues in our state.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Roger S. Jackson". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Roger S. Jackson
Executive Director
MAHPERD